17: Erman--257 N-3 (1828-29)1850 Yakut
116, 226, 556, 437

"In Kantinsk, seventy-seven versts from Peskovsk, and in the following stages, the Russian population is mixed with more than an equal proportion of Yakuts. These are far more successful fishers and hunters than the Russians, and we were always sure of finding in their yurts a good stock of carp and other fish. Many of them have grown rich by barter, while the Russians here, by their own confession, find a miserable subsistence."

17: Erman--258 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 226, 437

"I purchased of the Yakuts in Murierinsk a supply of carp, which furnished us with some good dinners in the following part of our journey. Most of these fish were now swelled with roe to double their ordinary size, and many of them were very large independent of this circumstance. The method adopted here for carrying them is to run a stick, about two feet long, through the middle of the body, so as to sustain a great number of fish with their flat sides close together, while a crook at either end prevents their falling off. They are taken in the lakes belonging to the Yakuts on the northern side of the Lena, and, consequently, the Russians on the river have only as many of these fish, as those original and more practised lords of the soil allow to escape to them. The latter, however, carry many hundred poods of this fish for sale into the upper part of the valley."

17: Erman--258 [2] N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 361, 437

"Mitleyev [RCH: one of the author's companions on his journey] left with the Yakuts in Murierinsk, a packet, which was to be forwarded, from hand to hand, to the settlement of Olensk, which lies northwards in lat. 63.8. This is, as they term it, a place of the Yakuts, where several Russian merchants, with a priest of the Greek Church, reside for the sake of trade. In the older Russian maps, in truth, is found at this place, on the river Olenek, the following indication--'Projected city of Olensk; and close to it are marked the dwellings of the Yakutian princes, Khariton Shishkin and Muishkapan Okin, along with the yurts of their people. When modern maps, on the other hand, represent the banks of the river as almost wholly depopulated, I cannot help thinking that this confession is somewhat premature, for even now the Yakuts of Murierinsk look upon their prosperity and thriving condition as the consequences of the trade with those of the same race who live farther north."

17: Erman--258-260 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut-1-3
116, 291, 511, 557, 177.55 Russia
636.55

"Sunduki and Nyuis are likewise Yakutian villages, with a small share of Russian population. The dwellings here are extremely neat, and both the food and clothing of the people bear witness to their comfortable circumstances. The women, generally, wear in the house, a gown of some coloured web; the men wear short over-coats of reindeer skin, with the hair turned in, and the outside leather-coloured. A young Yakutian woman replied to me, with great naïvetè, as I was commending her housekeeping, 'That all the Russians now seemed to think as I did, for they were no longer above marrying a Yakut.' In [259] fact, the envy which the opulence of the Asiatics has usually awakened in the minds of the European invaders, takes here the deceitful appearance of esteem. The Russians flatter the strong, because these will not allow themselves to be imposed upon.

The lowest temperature to-day was —2 R. The morning was cloudy, and snow fell a little before noon. After that the sky became quite clear, and continued so for half an hour, till we found ourselves beyond Bukhturminsk, between high cliffs. Then there came on suddenly a gust, with a whirlwind from the west; in a few seconds the upper part of the heavens was covered with thick and heavy clouds. Before us dark streaks hung down from the edges of the lowering masses, without touching the horizon, and while I was thinking how like this looked to a summer hail-storm, we heard, all at once,

the rattling of the falling stones, and were overwhelmed with compact and heavy pieces of ice. They had the form of tetrahedrons, three lines long on each side, and, when crushed, broke into regular triangular laminae. They wanted only the rounding off of one of the surfaces which is usually seen in summer hail. Taken in conjunction with what I thus experienced myself, some meteorological statements of the peasants in Dubrova seemed important. They told me that in their country there were hail storms in winter too, and, in answer to a question of mine, they asserted, that they had also known instances of thunder and lightning in winter; such a storm had occurred, for instance, the preceding year, about Christmas, with mist, after very severe frost. On the north-west coast of America, indeed, where the humid and warm sea air falls on the cold land, I have known hail and electric storms in winter, but such a phenomenon in the middle of the continent was quite unexpected. Storms of this kind are unknown in Irkutsk and in Yakutsk, and must therefore be regarded as local effects of the air issuing from the narrower parts of the valley. In fact, the suddenness of congelation and precipitation which gives rise to hail and electric clouds, suggest themselves to the mind when we think of the humid air from between the cliffs, with the much colder air of the adjacent plains; and, accordingly, winter hail and winter thunder-storms appear to characterize the region of goitre on the Lena, as distinctly as the absence of summer hail characterizes

the valleys of the Alps where cretinism is most prevalent.

We arrived in the morning at the Russian houses of Yerbinsk, thirty-five versts from Nyuis, which lie on the left [260] bank, in a fertile opening of the valley encircled by hills, on which pine woods are intermingled with bare rocks. On the way here from Irkutsk, I had hitherto always observed a very weak eastern declination of the magnetic needle; we were therefore not far from the line of no declination. Here, in Yerbinsk, it was apparent that we had crossed that line yesterday for the third time in the course of our journey, and that we were now again, as we had been in Kiakhta and in Europe, in a division of the earth having a western declination."

17: Erman--260 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 178, 563, 437

" An old Russian, from the vicinity of Murom, who had been banished to Yerbinsk some fifty years before for homicide, complained to me, with laughable impudence, of the progressive improvement of the Yakuts. Formerly, these people paid for every pound of flour, with the finest furs, but now they hardly paid as much for a pood; and so it sometimes happened that they laid up a stock of flour, and then, in the winter, retailed it to the Russians. Indeed, when he first came here, every Russian passed with the Yakuts for a superior being, --they have even stood to salute him at a respectful distance; but matters were at last nearly come to that pass that he would have to bow to the Yakuts."

"We came in the evening to the yurts of Nokhtuisk, fifty-five versts from Kamenovsk, which are inhabited by very thriving and intelligent Yakuts. Several of the men whom we met in the post-hut spoke Russian fluently, and were proud of this advantage. One of them, who had travelled several times to Irkutsk, entered into an argument with Mitléyev respecting the age of Yakutsk and Irkutsk. The Yakut maintained, and with reason, that the former of these capitals was first founded; but it was not till he said to the Kosak, 'Siberia was conquered 250 years ago, under the Tsar, Ivan Vasilevich,' that his learning was formally eulogized with the words 'Now I see that you have read the history of Siberia.' (1) The same Yakut said, in reply to a question of mine respecting the relationship existing between his nation and the Buraets, that they were both of one descent, and that their languages were still very much alike. In saying this, he referred only to the present inhabitants of the sources of the Lena, whom he had seen himself; and in confirmation of his statement, we find that in the beginning of the seventeenth century, (1630,) when the Yakuts were just beginning to make the acquaintance of the Russians, they preserved the tradition, that they had dwelt at one time in the upper valley, close to the Buraets and Mongols, and were at length separated, in

1. This man had probably received instruction in the public school of Yakutsk.

17: Erman--262 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut-2
116, 174

consequence of a war, from those neighbours and kinsmen, and driven back into their present abodes."

17: Erman--263 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 237, 342

"We arrived about seven in the morning at Beresovoi Ostrov, or Birch Island, fifty-six versts from Nokhtuisk. The place so called contains a single very comfortable farmhouse, built by an old exile from the government of Nijegorod.... In the construction of the house and stable the example of the Yakuts was here followed, for the wooden walls were plastered on the outside with cow-dung."

17: Erman--264 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 595, 583, 584

"At Delgeisk, an old Yakut told me many particulars respecting the present manners and customs of his people. 'Here in the neighbourhood of the Russians, every one contents himself with one wife; but, among the families of the northern tracts, polygamy is as prevalent as ever. The old custom is kept up in regard to what is called the kolùim, or the sum for which every Yakut buys his wife. This is usually a number of cattle, to the value of 200 or 300 roobles; but as the family of the man are not always in a condition to pay the stipulated amount at once, it is customary to affiance the boys already in their twelfth year. The betrothed girls may be visited in their parents' yurts by their intended husbands, but cannot be taken home by the latter till the payment of the kolùim is completed. The sum thus paid goes wholly to the father of the bride, who carries only a few presents with her to her new home. Matchmakers, male and female--the svàti and svàkhui of the Russians, are indispensable as witnesses in settling the price of the bride.'"

17: Erman--264-265 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 171, 197, 354

"Many of the Yakutian words, written from the lips of this man, [RCH: an old Yakut at Delgeisk] showed no essential agreement with the equivalent terms of the Sabaikalian Buraets, as given by Mitlèyev. On the other hand, I remarked in the yurts here many remarkable resemblances to the manners of the Ostyaks on the Obi. Thus the fire-place, the most important part of all northern dwellings, is constructed by both tribes after the same idea, for it consists here, as on the Obi, of a wicker frame plastered over with clay. The only difference is in the position of the apparatus, for the back of the fire-place is placed by the Ostyaks close to the wall of the house, whereas the Yakuts always leave room for a man to pass between their fire-place and the wall. The flue is therefore perpendicular in the yurts on the Obi, whereas in those of the Yakuts here they lean backwards, at an angle of 30°, so as to form a continuation of the burning logs, which are placed in a similarly oblique position, resting below on the bottom of the fire-place, and above, on the mouth of the flue. This deviation from the Ostyak mode of construction is evidently advantageous, for here, the moment the fire is kindled, a strong and audible [265] draught is perceptible, with a bright flame; but in the yurts on the Obi there is more frequently pungent smoke with a dull fire."

17: Erman--265 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 177, 224, 411

"The ermine-traps, which the Yakuts of Delgeisk showed me, prove that, at some time or other, important traditions have found their way from Obdorsk to this part of the Lena. They corresponded perfectly with the yugel, as they are called, or self-shooting bows, which I found in use for the same purpose in Kunduvansk; the only difference being that the opening for the ermine is circular in the Ostyak trap, and square in that of the Yakuts. It cannot be assumed that two inventors, independently of each other, hit upon the same mechanical contrivance, which is by no means simple."

17: Erman--266 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 231, 342

"From Nelensk to Olekma we left the ice for three stages, and a distance of ninety-five versts, and travelled through a marshy plain on the left bank. We first met with some Yakutian yurts, with flat roofs covered up high with earth, and surrounded with hurdles, within which the cattle are kept in summer, and then we came to the dangerous spot of which we had been told yesterday."

17: Erman--266-267 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 342, 361, 492

"The tract of country which follows [RCH: from Neleusk to Olekma] is well peopled with Yakuts, whose winter dwellings always stand alone, in wide grassy lawns, in the midst of the prevailing pine woods. Here, too, the rectangular wooden huts are flat-roofed and plastered with cow dung, and the doors, for want of planking, are covered over with hairy ox hides. Flakes of ice fill the windows, yet in some of the yurts, bladder is used instead of these. The Yakutian sledges, which we met with continually were, like those of the Buraets, drawn by oxen, on one of which the driver rode. At the same time horses have been used here for riding fromearly [267] ages, as is proved indeed by the peculiarities of the Yakutian horse furniture. Their saddles have unusually thick stuffing, on which the rider sits, squeezed in between two high and perpendicular boards. The white colour of the horses decidedly gains ground here, along with the Yakutian population."

17: Erman--267-268 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 325

"I also heard here [RCH: at Olekma] of an iron ore, roundish masses of which are found at Vilui. It is said that the Yakut smiths used to smelt it, before the Russians came here, and the ore is on that account still called chugún, or casting iron. Pieces of it, which I saw in Tobolsk, were very far, nevertheless, from being pure iron. They were nothing but a mixture of earthy brown iron ore with specks of the pyrites from which it was probably formed. Its chemical constitution brings to mind the ore at Yerbinsk changed by decomposition from exposure to air and moisture, and also a similar phenomenon in the limestone on the western slope of the Ural; [268] but the metallic pieces of Vilui are always much larger than those thin and streaky stalactites."

17: Erman--269 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut-1-2
116, 342, 171, 354, 372

"The Yakuts in Namana, and along the road onward for 110 versts, as far as Sanayakhtàtsk, live still quite in their ancient, original fashion. Again, I found their yurts exactly like those of the Ostyaks; they are rectangular, flat-roofed, and fitted inside with what are here called narui, that is, raised and divided berths along the walls. The thick flakes of ice, which serve as window panes, were here also held against the wall from the outside, by a slanting pole, the lower end of which was fixed in the ground. In the night, when the fire goes out, this ice is covered, like glass, with an opaque and snow-like hoar-frost, which, in the daytime melts away, as well as a considerable portion of the ice itself, from the heat of the yurt, and the flakes, which are, at first, a foot thick, require to be renewed four or five times in the course of the winter; a provision of suitable ice always lying before the yurt. The parts of these dwellings which are directly heated by the fire, attain a temperature of +15° or +20° R. (1) We found the

1. It may be assumed that, of the heat proceeding from the fire-place, there is as much expended on the flake of ice as passes, on an average, through an equal area of the wooden wall. In a cubical yurt of 15 feet, the melting, in succession, of four flakes of ice a foot thick, shows that the whole amount of heat in 170 winter's days, would suffice to melt 5400 cubic feet of ice. The quantity of fuel required for this would amount, according to Rumford's experiments, if applied most advantageously,

> to 231 cubic feet of wood in the course of the winter, or about 87 pounds a day. The daily supply which lies near the fire-place in the Yakutian yurts seems not to exceed this.

children in them, of both sexes, quite naked; they were, nevertheless, running about in this state to-day, when the thermometer was as low as —10° R., and even in the open air."

17: Erman--269-270 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 291, 171, 563, 177

"In the clothing of adults, there is manifested a strong predilection for bright colours, for the women in the house, as among the Buraets, wore clothes of green or other bright Chinese stuffs; while the men had on tight-fitting, short frocks, which closely resembled [270] the esquires' tabards in the middle ages. They were almost always made of white linen, with blue borders. At the lower end, behind, was a perpendicular slit, to prevent their incommoding on horseback. Even the fur caps of these people were covered with white linen, and adorned with squirrels' tails, and other black furs.

The few Russians who live at these stations to superintend the post, speak nothing but Yakutian among themselves, and are distinguishable from the indigenous population only by their greater length of face, their fairer complexion, and the comparative poverty of their clothing."

17: Erman--270 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 276, 563

"Mitléyev [RCH: one of the author's companions on his journey] gave vent several times to his horror at the Russians whom he met with at the places along this road, because being among the Yakuts, 'they had laid aside not only the Christian (i. e. the Russian) language, but also every Christian custom.' They ate, forsooth, during the most solemn fasts, of the most strictly forbidden kinds of meat, without any shame, and excused themselves only by alleging the want of fish in the Lena. In the lakes lying around there were carp in abundance, but they fell all to the share of the Yakuts. The Russian women here were as passionately fond of smoking tobacco as any of the fair natives. The pipes used by the Yakuts, both men and women, are so small that a few whiffs suffice to empty them. Their bowls are conical cups, of Chinese bronze, half an inch wide, and terminate below in a hollow and very thin cylinder, which is fixed into the wooden tube of the pipe. This is formed of two flat pieces of wood laid together, in each of which is cut half of the cylindrical canal. When properly joined they are tied round with a thin strip of leather, which makes them air-tight. These pipes have the inappreciable advantage of allowing the tobacco oil which settles in the tube to be collected; this, mixed with fine wood shavings, is then smoked a second time."

17: Erman--272-273 N-3 (1828-29)1850 Yakut-1-2
116, 233, 174

"The Yakuts living in the 62d degree of latitude, have far more trouble in keeping their cattle, than any other people devoted to the same kind of husbandry. They make long journeys to collect hay for the winter, yet they do not always find enough of it, but are often obliged to feed their oxen, from March to May, only on the willow and birch twigs, which they procure on the islands in the Lena. The further we examine into particulars, the greater must be our surprise, when we behold here for the first time, a thriving cattle-husbandry in the midst of deep snow and under terrible frosts; we involuntarily ask ourselves, how it came to pass that the Yakuts attached their existence to a domestic animal which is found nowhere else in Asia, under the same circumstances of climate. They have themselves a tradition, that they once brought their herds down the Lena, in boats from the sources of the river: but this is assuredly no explanation; it is only a proof that they are themselves sensible of the contrast between the climate they dwell under, and the nature of their domestic animal. I might more reasonably hold the cattle here to be a bequest from a preceding period; that is to say the rem[273]nant of a wild breed, which, in earlier periods of the earth's history, occupied this region in particular. The skulls of wild cattle are found very often in the Lena, and the lakes in the neighbourhood. Living and untamed individuals are to be seen beyond Behring Straits, on the coasts of Hudson's Bay; and doubtless, those dead cattle, as well as these living remnants, all belong to an age of the world, when the northern parts of the earth had a much milder winter than at present. There remained

17. Erman--272-273 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut-2
116, 233, 174

here, instead of the long-haired American bison, the scattered bones of that original breed, and, thanks to the care of the Yakuts, their degenerated herds."

17: Erman-- 273-274 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut-1-2
116, 115, 622, 631, 177.63 Russia
636.63

"In Ulakhansk, sixty-one versts from Toyon aruin, I met in the yard where we alighted a noble chieftain of the Yakuts, who was on his way to a judicial inquiry. He was distinguished from the rest of his countrymen by superior stature, for the Yakuts, though broad-shouldered and very strong-boned, are collectively not above the middle size. He was also in good case, as befits, according to the ideas of the Yakuts, those who are well off; for the adage says, 'To eat much meat and to grown fat upon it, is the highest destiny of men.' I admired this man's frock, made of blue cloth with red facings and white metal buttons; it had an old-fashioned European look, and was, doubtless, made in imitation of some suit of honour presented to one of his predecessors by the Tsar. He gave me to understand, however, with national pride, that his genuine Yakutian cap was better worth looking at and more valuable also. It was lined with squirrel-skins, and outside was very artificially made up of sable, otter, and black fox furs; it had, moreover, very odd-looking appendages made of the fur of the glutton, which hung down over his back.

This chief's feelings respecting the dignity of his nation, and above all, of his own dignity, displayed themselves throughout all his conversation, which he carried on in broken Russian. --Thus, he always named Yakutsk 'the city of the Yakuts;' and he congratulated me on my prospect of soon visiting its rich yurts. He told me that the administration of justice, and the general internal management of society among the

Yakuts, are still left in their hands. Their immediate chiefs and magistrates are still of their own nation, . . . The whole race has been divided, from time immemorial, into certain tribes; each of which is again distributed into Ulúsi, [RCH: the Ulus is a sub-tribe] or communes. The heads of the latter are chosen by the Yakuts, from the chief families, for life. They are called Toyoni; which [274] the Russians very properly translate by Knyás or prince. But it is extremely unbecoming, on the other hand, to put these nobles and other heads of tribes on an equal footing with the mayor of a Russian village, and so entitle them merely gólova! These principal dignitaries remain in office only three years; the Yakuts always choose them from the number of their acknowledged princes, and they are therefore not inferior, certainly, to a Russian governor; and, particularly, because the charge of public administration among the Yakuts is defrayed by that people themselves. When he and other Toyoni required cattle on the road for an official journey, they levied them not on the Russians, but on their own people."

17: Erman--274 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116. 177, 212

"He [RCH: ie., a Yakut chief in Ulakhansk] assured me that the writing of the Buraets was quite unknown here, and that before the arrival of the Russians the people had no idea of written characters. Consequently, all written communications to the Yakuts are made in the Russian language and writing."

17: Erman--292 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut -1-2
116, 533, 175, 651, 177.65 Russia
636.65

"I have already mentioned a census of the indigenous population, which had been made the preceding year in the northern part of the government of Tobolsk. A similar work was now going forward in Eastern Siberia, and I met in Yakutsk with three excellent men who were employed in its execution. Of these, M. Pyatuitki alone was connected with the finance department in St. Petersburg, while MM. Tásken and Slòbin, from the mines of Nerchinsk, were associated with him, in order to afford him the opportunity of becoming acquainted with whatever mineral riches might exist in the tracts of country gone over. The main object of the expedition was to make a new assessment of the yasak or fur tribute for the several families and tribes of the indigenous population; and we were told thay they were instructed by the government to deal with the people in the mildest possible manner. Yet they had been able to increase the yasak every where throughout the tracts occupied by the Yakuts and Tunguzes along the Upper Lena, as the number of inhabitants had increased there considerably during the last fifty years. It is said that the same result is obtained for all Siberia taken together, and that exceptions are to be found only in localities where endemic diseases prevail, as in the case of the Verkhovian Ostyaks. I heard on this occasion of a particular kind of numerical notation, invented during the present intercourse with the aboriginal tribes, and in which the new assessments were expressed and enjoined to the several communities, and the old accounts settled. It consisted of only six different figures, which represented furs

to the value of 5 and 10 kopeks, and of 1, 10, 100, and 1000 roobles respectively. When the amount of the assessment was agreed on, it was written in these runes on paper, and then cut on wooden staves as permanent memorials, as the Ostyaks and Votyaks are accustomed to do in their private transactions. To the inhabitants of remote and secluded yurts this was obviously an event of great importance, and worthy to form an epoch in their history. The Yakuts celebrated it in extemporaneous songs, of which a Russian interpreter preserved this fragment: 'The commission erected its throne with us for the good of all; receive it well, ye other tribes, that ye also may be dealt with wisely.'"

17: Erman--298-299 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut-1-2
116, 291, 171, 281

"For winter travelling, the Yakuts, like the Ostyaks and Samoyedes, wear a fur frock, with the hair outside. Even here this outer garment is generally made of reindeer skins, yet the poorer people use for the same purpose the skins of slaughtered horses and oxen. To this garment is always given the form befitting the saddle, which I have mentioned before. It is trimmed round the edges with black furs, and is ornamented on the back with elaborate figures, in the same material. It is called sanayakh, a name given also to the over-coat of the women, which is, indeed, distinguished from that of the men only by its greater length; it is cut up behind, and adapted for riding, just like the other. During the milder part of the year, and for a long stay in the house, a garment of the same shape as the sanayakh, but made of extremely pliant leather, dyed yellow, is substituted for it. Yet it is not uncommon to find in the yurts men and women with the upper part of the body naked, when they return from the open air to the fire, or have just got up from their sleeping benches, for the cloaks are worn immediately next the breasts. Both sexes wear, moreover, on the lower part of the body, drawers of pliant reindeer skin, which, like those of the Ostyaks, reach from the loins to the middle of the thigh; leggins, which are fastened to the lower end of the drawers, and water-proof boots. This last, and most excellent, part of their dress, is called eterbàs, from which name the Russians here, who, decidedly and justly, prefer the Yakutian boots to European shoeing of any kind, have made torbasà. They fit every where close to the leg, and cover it from the sole of the foot to far above the knee; at the same time, owing to their perfect

pliability, they are as convenient, for pedestrians as for horsemen. That they may be at once flexible and water-proof, the torbasàs are always cut of thin horse-skin; which is steeped, in the first place, in sour milk, and smoked, and then rubbed well with fat and fine soot from the chimneys. The sole, also, is made of the same kind of leather; the seams are sewed inside, and towards the toe there is a point turned upwards, just as in the boots of the Bashkirs at the present day, and in those of Russian horsemen in the sixteenth century. But, on the other hand, these boots are without the high heels which make the walk of the Bashkir and Kirgiz so awkward and ungainly. Two long strings of leather are sewed to the torbasas at the bottom, to be fastened tight round[299] the leg, first at the ankle, and then, when they have been brought behind the calf, again under the knee, where their ends are tied together."

17: Erman--299 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 291, 171, 492

"The Yakuts use, for protection against the cold, a broad and serpentine tippet (in their language, moitruk) of black squirrel tails, gloves of fox fur (utélek,) and a cap (bergésa) of striped cloth, which covers the forehead and part of the face, with a bordering of glutton skin. I have observed with some Yakutian girls, a kind of leathern cushion, which they wore under the sanayakh and over the drawers. The object of this was, probably, to mitigate the hardships of riding on oxen; perhaps, too, it might be compared with a somewhat similar piece of dress worn by the Chuvashian women."

17: Erman--299 [2] N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 262, 527, 234

"No less peculiar is the food of these people; they all prefer horse flesh to beef, but are so careful of their cattle that none but the richest slaughter any regularly, the rest only on festivals and special occasions. At wedding feasts all the guests are treated with beef, and the bride serves up to her future lord a boiled horse's head, garnished with a kind of sausage made of horse flesh. Far more important to the majority of the Yakuts is the milk of their cows and mares. In summer they have the greatest abundance of it, and then they use it unmixed in making many dishes. For winter they keep a stock of milk in vessels of birch bark, and with a certain quantity of it, thinned with water, and some vegetable substances, they make their daily porridge. It is only in the neighbourhood of the Russians that they can procure flour for this purpose; in the remoter yurts, the under bark of the fir and larch supplies the ordinary material of bread. This is pounded in a mortar, made, like the walls of the yurts themselves, of cow-dung laid on basket work, and frozen hard."

17: Erman--299-300 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 234, 273, 796

"In June and July, when the mares foal, the Yakuts show themselves as skilful as the Bashkirs, Buraets, and other Siberian tribes, in the art of setting mare's milk into the vinous fermentation. They then celebrate a religious thanksgiving and festival, at which the men empty off, at a single draught, immense wooden goblets of these intocicating drinks. The women are, on these occasions, obliged to content themselves with the intoxication of tobacco fumes. There are some, also, who distil the sour milk, as is done by the Buraets, in an iron kettle; which, in order to collect the vapours driven off, is covered with a board, and provided with a wooden tube passing under water. The Yakutian name, aruigui, designates both this national spirit and [300] Russian brandy. Another oily kind of drink, made of milk, is used in winter; the Yakuts call it arui, but the Russians, in plain terms, melted Yakutian butter; and this, too, is capable of intoxicating if it be taken in sufficient quantity. Besides these, all kinds of fish and animals of the forest are eaten by the Yakuts, without scruple, and without much delicacy of selection. The branch of this nation which is cut off from the rest, near the shores of the Icy Sea, are able to conform to necessity, and to subsist entirely on this kind of food for the keeping of reindeer, which enriches the Tunguzes in that quarter, has never succeeded with the Yakuts."

17: Erman--300 N-3 (1828-29)1850 Yakut
116, 178, 517, 296, 294

"Although the Yakuts are considerably inferior in civilization to the Buddhistic Buraets, yet they possess, in many respects, extraordinary cleverness and knowledge. They have the appearance, rather, of a people who have grown wild, than of a thoroughly and originally rude race. Their skilful management of the deer-skin, and their expertness in ornamental sewing, are conspicuous in every article of their clothing, and in many details of Yakutian house-keeping, to be mentioned hereafter. They seem, in many cases, to have in view, not merely the satisfaction of their wants, but decoration, also, and pleasing appearance. Yet, while pronouncing this opinion, it is necessary that we should look fairly at the kind of life led by these herdsmen; and, having done so, we cannot feel surprised that every thing belonging to them smells of cow-dung, and that their clothes, which are never washed, very soon take the look and colour of the substance with which they are in perpetual contact."

17: Erman--300 [2] N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 171, 325, 439, 294

"Some productions of Yakutian industry are purchased by the Russians, and sent into Europe, particularly floor-cloths of white and coloured felts, which are cut into narrow pieces, and them tastefully and symmetrically sewed together, like mosaic. It is a still weightier circumstance that these people have been able, from the earliest times, to procure themselves certain metals, and have known how to work them. The iron ore of Vilui is smelted and wrought in the yurts at that place, just in the same manner as at Tashkent, or as among the Buraet s and the Tatars of Kusnetsk."

17: Erman--300-301 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 177, 412, 301, 174, 531

"Long before the Russians came here, the other tribes of Yakuts got from those at Vilui iron axes, awls, and tools for stripping and dressing the hides; together with copper ornaments for their clothes and harness and the metal plates which they, like the Ostyaks, sew on their girdles. But even now when they [301] make use of European guns, every man among them still exercises the skill peculiar to the nation, in making the great knife, or dagger, which is carried under the sanayakh at the waistband. The Yakutian steel is easily distinguished from the Russian, by its being somewhat flexible; and yet blades made of it will cut copper and pewter as easily as the best European blades. The wooden handle of the knife is always ornamented, after the original fashion, with tin work; from which it is evident that they procured the materials from Nerchinsk, before the Russians knew any thing of the metals in that quarter. They cut figures in the wood, and cast the tin into the hollow; a large knob of the metal left at the top of the knife-handle, is then shaped with the chisel. The sheaths of these Yakutian daggers are made of birch bark, and covered with black leather, on which, again, are metal mountings, with straight-lined patterns engraved on them. I had occasion, once before, to mention some decisive proofs of the influence which the Siberians of the furthest north exercised on the civilizations of the Yakuts. Here, on the other hand, certain handicrafts, characteristic of nomadic life, and, above all, the art of working metals, evidently point to a connexion with the tribes at present inhabiting the southern steppes and mountains. The physical character, also, and language of the Yakuts decide in favour of the same view."

17: Erman--301 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 142

"Their yellow complexion, the sharp lines of their faces, which express indolent and amiable gentleness rather than vigour and passion, their pitch-black hair, also, which the men wear cut close, all reminded me of the Tatars of Western Siberia. The Yakutian women look much more lively and cheerful than the men; they are often very beautifully formed, have regular features and sparkling black eyes; yet these attractions are seen only with the younger of them, their faces, which are not round but oval, and somewhat lean, being, like those of the Tatar women, disfigured by wrinkles at an early age."

17: Erman--301-302 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 177, 197

"It cannot by any means be maintained, that the Yakuts have received the better part of their civilization, at some time or other, from Mongolian neighbours; their names for the Deity, for iron, and the other metals, (excepting the tin of the Buraets,) for their fishing gear, &c. are all pure Turkish. They call the intoxicating and distilled drinks made from milk, by the same names as the Turkish Tatars. The Yakutian term aruigui, which is the name for brandy, common to all the Turks, from which also is derived our European word arrak, is used also, indeed, by the Buraets [302] and some other Mongolian tribes; but yet it seems to be, in its origin, the property of the Turkish race, with whom it does not stand isolated, but in connexion with the names of other kindred objects. This is the case with the Yakuts, with whom the word aruigui, or milk brandy, is a modification of, or derived from, arui, cow-butter."

17: Erman--302-303 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut-1-2
116, 533, 153, 821

"The teachers in the schools in Yakutsk, informed me that in their Yakutian scholars was to be remarked a singular aptitude for mechanical arts; but that, on the other hand, it was vain to think of teaching them arithmetic, or any such logical acquirements. Other Russians, who were as well acquainted with the language of the Yakuts as with their own, told me that the songs of those people often contain very remarkable passage of a character which we should call romantic. Thus, they assume that 'the trees of the forest hold discourse with one another; and other inanimate things with men.' These poetic fantasies pass away, for the most part, just as they arise, for whether on a journey, or in cheerful humour at home, every one sings the new impressions made on him at the moment, by the objects around him. They have for that purpose a kind of song consisting of only two notes; these are repeated frequently in such a way that the higher note follows the lower till towards the end of each part or verse, when their order is reversed. The whole air sounds so melancholy, that I often thought that I heard some one in the town wailing aloud, when, in fact, it was only the extemporaneous song of the Yakuts. It is not unlikely that my occupations have lived for the moment in Yakutian verses. The men inhabiting the yurts near our residence, used to come every night to the yard, to observe the use made of the transit instrument, and they[303] soon made up their minds as to its purpose. They were of opinion that I was reckoning the stars, and wrote down each of them in the account; that, in fact, a star had been lost in St. Petersburg, and I had been sent to try whether it could be found again

in any part of the earth. This story spread through the town, in the first instance, so generally, that even Russians asked me whether it was well founded; it then made its way over the country, even as far as the Tunguzes."

17: Erman--303 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 674, 152, 177

"In the neighbourhood of the Russians, the original good nature of the Yakuts has been adulterated with a great deal of vanity, and some covetousness. Crimes, though still rare among them, are no longer quite unheard of. When I was staying in the town, a man was murdered in the street, while returning to a yurt in the neighbourhood. Another Yakut came forward to say that he had found the dead body, but the day after he confessed that he was the murderer, and that his sole object was to get the dead man's money."

2

17: Erman--305 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 281, 415

"These bags, made by the Yakuts, and alone used here by the Russians, are called súmui. They are made of horse-leather, with the hair stripped off. The side thus stripped is turned outwards, and, from its smoothness, and whitish hue, it closely resembles parchment. The súmui most carefully made, are those used for carrying flour from this to Okhotsk and Kamchatka. They are cylinders only three or four inches high, and about a foot and a half in diameter, joined by a scarcely visible seam inside, and filled through a small opening in the side. On the journey, they lie with the flat surface against the animal's flanks."

17: Erman--306 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 177, 437

"The snow had already melted in the streets of Yakutsk during the last few days; I found it necessary, therefore, to get all our luggage packed on oxen before our door, and carried to the bank of the Lena. There it was stowed, with much trouble, in the sledges, two ofwhich I intrusted to the superintendence of the Kosaks. The borders of the river are here quite flat, and the icy surface, four versts wide, on which we travelled,could hardly be distinguished from the plain on the right bank. On this, we first met with some Yakutian yurts, with German names! They are called yàrmonskiya, that is, the yurts of the yearly market (jahrmarktliche) or fair, because the Russian merchants meet here in summer, and begin their journey to Okhotsk by bartering with the Yakuts of the neighbourhood."

17: Erman--306-307 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 342

"Deep snow had effaced every trace of the road, even between the trees, and it was not till noon, therefore, and eleven hours after our first starting, that we reached Talbuiyakhtàtsk, [307] a stage only twenty-eight versts from Yakutsk. There, in a cleared spot of the wood, stand four winter yurts; close by are some paddocks fenced in, to keep the cattle together in summer, and a frame of a tent, which is likewise used only in the warm season. It is formed of a number of poles, about twenty feet long, which are united at the top into a roomy cone. The Russians call these summer abodes of the Yakuts, berostinui, from beresa, the birch, because they are covered with the bark of this tree. Here the people were, in fact, repairing a roof of this kind. It was made of quadrangular pieces of bright yellow and perfectly flexible bark, which was not merely joined together, but was very handsomely worked along the seam with horsehair thread."

17: Erman--308-309 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut-1-2
116, 782, 756, 231

"At the yurts of Porotovsk, 109 versts from Yakutsk, I made at noon magnetical and astronomical observations, and here already I found the Russian maps erring considerably in the position of places with respect to Yakutsk; we then went over thickly wooded hills to Churopchinsk, and thence to Aruilákhinsk, where we stayed till morning. In the woods between these places, I remarked for the first time, a singular custom of the nomadic Yakuts. At different points on the road the trees were to be seen hung thick with horse-hair, and my driver assured me that every horseman who passed by was sure to add more or less to this strange store. Here, also, it was manifest that white horses prevail among the Yakuts; but, apart from this, many of the tufts of hair had so weather-beaten an appearance, that there could be no doubt of their antiquity. Others were quite fresh, and had been tied on the boughs but a day or two. Our Yakut attendant said further, in reply to our inquiries--and, indeed, all his answers in similar matters were much to the same effect--that it was done in compliance with ancient custom, and that he knew no other reason for it. Yet the religious bearing of this custom appears at once from its name, which signifies a propitiation for the Lieshi or Spirit of the Woods, as the Kosaks explain it. All the merchants of Yakutsk deem it expedient to adopt, when travelling, the prevalent belief, and to satisfy its demands at the cost of their horses' tails. The Yakuts here have clung to several other devout inventions of their shamans. Thus the annual consecration of a horse is usual with them, as with the Western Turkish tribes. They select for this purpose the best stallions, which, after

receiving certain benedictions, remain thenceforth exempt from every kind of work. It is possible that they intend thereby to offer a kind of satisfaction in general for the labours or violent death await- [309] ing them, yet the shrewd priests have not overlooked the practical advantage of securing good treatment for the fathers of the droves."

17: Erman--309-310 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 262, 291, 372

"The yurts of Lebegine and Menjega belong also to cow-keeping Yakuts. These people repeated to us the assurance that they prefer horse-flesh to all other meat, and that from their horned cattle they take for food, only milk and butter. Many here, too, wore pelisses of horse-skin, with the hair turned outwards; the rest, the usual sana-yakh or riding coat, which was made of reindeer leather, dyed of a reddish colour, and trimmed with a blue border at the corners. I observed in these yurts, for the first time, an excellent substitute for our tinder; it is made of the stalks of a kind of grass which grows in dry places. These are dried and beaten in the mortars which the Yakuts employ in preparing the bark meal. By this means the spiral vessels of the grass are separated from the rest, in tough, woolly [310] threads, about a fifth of a line thick. They are then rubbed well with wood-ashes from the hearth, and are thus rendered extremely inflammable. For a long time I used no other than this Yakutian tinder, and if it got damp I renewed it, and made it as susceptible as ever by only rubbing it with larch-ashes. It burned slowly, with an agreeable smell, and was capable of kindling even moist tobacco."

17: Erman--315-316 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 291, 164, 855

"We first went eight versts, on a level tract, to a yurt which stands on the broad valley of a rivulet. It belonged to an aged [316] Yakut who, with a young wife, had a family of five children. His business was fishing in the neighbouring stream; yet here again I found some calves occupying the straw in the narrow dwelling. The children were quite naked, and even the woman, who had slept till near mid-day, had nothing on but her short drawers, and went about with the upper part of her body naked all the time that I was in the yurt. In this there was no breach of Yakutian propriety, for women are not forbidden to expose themselves in this manner, except in the presence of their father-in-law, or of their husband's elder brother. She was a well-grown woman, with regular, handsome features; but, at the same time, disfigured with filth, like every thing else in this miserable hut. One of the elder children, which was running about with the others, was afflicted with a remarkable and formidable-looking eruption. The left side of its body exhibited a wound about an inch wide, which had extended, herpetically, from the head perpendicularly down to the middle of the body. On the parts affected, the upper skin seemed totally destroyed, and instead of it there was only to be seen the blood-red flesh. The parents, when I asked them about this malady, seemed to look upon it as a usual and ordinary matter; and in truth I subsequently saw many cases of it among the Yakuts, but chiefly in children."

17: Erman--319 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut-1-2
116, 164

"In M. Argunov's yurt was a girl, ten years old, the daughter of a Russian settler and a Yakutian woman. She seemed to be perfectly healthy, when, on a sudden, a few months before, this hereditary poison began to show its effects, and developed itself with fearful rapidity. There was now to be seen on one side of her head a bare stripe, which was not above an inch wide, and had a healthy growth of hair on both sides. It extended in a straight line from the skull forwards, and terminated in a sore-looking stripe of the same width on the forehead. The prolongation of this downwards had involved half of the left eye, and attacked it herpetically. The cornea must have been completely eaten through, for the fluids of the eye were running out, and the whole had a horrible appearance. Yet the patient was without pain, and the rest of her face was quite free from disfigurement. It seemed as if the devouring virus attacked only those places which it reached as it descended by its weight. Yet I cannot suppose that the cause which regulates its propagation immediately, is really so simple; for, in that case, the uniform direction of its course would be interrupted by the position of the patient when sleeping: yet, among the external characters of this eruption, one of the most constant is, that it propagates itself from above downwards in directions parallel with the mean line of the human body. (1)

1. Dr. Küber, while accompanying Wrangel's expedition to the Icy Sea in 1821-3, , observed among the Yakuts of the circle of

Srednekoluimsk, a disease which he pronounces to be elephantiasis. It always proves fatal among the Yakuts, who have no medical assistance, but Dr. Küber is of opinion that it would yield to proper treatment."

17: Erman--323 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 171, 291

"The Tunguzes, and their neighbours, the Yakuts, fasten with glue, on the under side of the snow-shoe, a strip of horse-hide, with the hair turned backwards. Snow-shoes of this kind are here indispensable for the hunter, and for every one who wishes to quit the beaten road, as without them one sinks above the knee at every step."

17: Erman--325 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 234

"To-day I was treated, for the first time, to the most important production of the dairy in this country, --I mean what is called Yakutian butter. This is, in fact, an oily substance, of an agreeable sub-acid flavour; and I could plainly distinguish, in the frozen pieces set before us, a portion that was thick and exactly like our butter, but coagulated smaller lumps, which was beginning to melt, even with the heat of the room. This is eaten, during the winter, by the Yakuts in large pieces without bread; I could also understand what I had previously heard, respecting the drinking of the melted butter, and of its intoxicating effects on those who take it to excess. Its sourish taste proves that a considerable portion of it has undergone fermentation, and is therefore in a state capable of yielding a vinous spirit."

17: Erman--325-326 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut-1-2
116, 171, 293

"Another practice, common to all the Yakuts and Tunguzes, came more immediately under my observation on this day's journey, and in these yurts, although it was not till some days later that I was convinced by experiment of its importance. I allude to the means of protection against the dazzling light, and particularly from the sun's rays reflected from the snow. The Yakuts all use for this purpose a very neatly made, narrow-meshed net of black horse-hair. It is about six inches long, and broad enough to cover the eyes, and has its elliptical border sewed to a thin piece of leather in such a way, that the side turned to the face is a little concave. It is then fastened with thin leathern loops to the ear, so that it has exactly the look of our European [326] spectacles. One of these eye-protectors was given to me here as a present, and at first I thought of treasuring the friendly gift; but, as the weather grew bright, I found myself obliged to tie it over my spectacles. This simple contrivance moderated, in the most agreeable manner, the dazzling light which, in a few hours, had brought on a violent inflammation, with a continual flood of tears from my eyes. Here, therefore, no one thinks of going on a journey without a snow-shade. They are carried, with the other most necessary articles, in the girdle, and are generally used when the sky is quite clear, and the sun at a certain height. But, besides, I saw in Chernolyés, and at some of our previous halting places, old women wearing them to protect their eyes from the blaze of the fire, at which they are constantly employed. Perhaps their eyes had been previously weakened by worse trials, and so rendered irritable. The Siberian-Russians in general call the

17: Erman--325-326 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut-2
116, 171, 293

snow-shade syetká, that is, net; a name very applicable to it, as made by the Yakuts, but not to another kind of shade, which is exclusively used by the Tunguzes."

17: Erman--330-331 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 306, 171, 177, 524

"When the work was finished, the girls began to employ themselves in the yurt with the business of decoration. In an elaborately made box of birch-bark they had treasured up some studs of brass and lead, beads, and old brass springs. These last were cut into small pieces, and strung with the studs and beads so ingeniously, that a very pretty ornament for the head was made with very poor materials. The Yakut had lent the girl his assistance in making this band, at her earnest request. I was more surprised at another of their amusements, respecting which, however, I subsequently learned, that it is much in vogue with all the Yakuts and Tunguzes. (1) A pack of cards, so much

1. The Tunguzes, in the circle of Koluimsk, are passionately fond of chess. They carve the chessmen very elaborately out of mammoth's teeth. These northern nomades probably received their acquaintance with this game, and taste for others, from China at a very early period.

worn out as to be hardly recognisable, was brought to light from a corner of the yurt. They played, two at a time, in turns, with-[331] out any stake, but very eagerly. The Russian names of the cards are those used here."

17: Erman--331-332 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 171, 584

"At last every one sought his berth for the night, having first provided himself with a lighted pipe. The girls took possession [332] of the narrow passage behind the fireplace, and after a little time I saw Daria's Yakutian friend follow them. It may be concluded, therefore, that between affianced Tunguzes, before the payment of the koluim, a kind of relationship subsists, like that known in Switzerland by the name of the kilchang; and from what I heard at Delgeisk on the Lena, it seems that the same custom prevails among the Yakuts."

17: Erman--398 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 231

"We enjoyed at Yelan once more thepleasures of a true Yakutian homestead, for we shared the hearth with two calves, and slept at the cow's feet, near the open cow-house door. The owners, however, declared that the stock of cattle here is but a shadow of that near Yakutsk, 'because the high sun is more injurious than the severest cold,' and, therefore, they got from a cow here not more than a quarter of a vedrò, or about two-thirds of a quart of milk a day. (1)

1. The vedrò contains 750 cubic inches. It must be observed that the dry and stony nature of the ground round Okhotsk is unfavourable to cattle. In Kamchatka, where more snow falls than at Okhotsk, the grass is so luxuriant that it may be mown three times a year at least. The cows carried thither from Yakutsk are improved by the more abundant pasture, and yield plenty of milk both in summer and winter."